

## Promoting Health Careers: A National Project To Alert High Schools

A NATIONWIDE PROJECT directed toward enlarging the pool of health personnel in the United States was formally launched on June 16, 1954. Designated "Operation Health Career Horizons," the project is planned as a major, concerted effort to tell the Nation's young people about career opportunities open to them in all the health professions and services. It is sponsored by the National Health Council, with the public service support of one of the council's sustaining members, the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States.

Impetus for the project came from the National Health Council's 1954 National Health Forum, which met in March 1954 to consider changing factors in staffing America's health services. Of the several key factors emerging from that forum, the need for enlarging the national pool of manpower for health services was paramount.

The project will open new recruitment channels by bringing to the 7 million boys and girls in the Nation's high schools information on a wide range of health opportunities. Albert W. Dent, president of the National Health Council, in announcing the project to the council's board of directors, expressed the hope that, through the project's lines of communication, all the health professions and their supporting services would be able to reach more and more candidates.

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*This material was prepared by the National Health Council.*

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### Publications Planned

The primary objective of Operation Health Career Horizons is to reach an audience which includes the young people themselves, their families, their teachers and advisers, and their communities. As its initial step, it will produce three publications and give them national distribution.

The plan for the basic document calls for it to be an attractive, yet concise, all-in-one-package guidebook for teachers and vocational counselors. The challenging word-and-picture presentation will provide two different views of health career opportunities: a wide-angle view of the entire health service field, highlighting its many callings and challenges, its goals and ideals, its personal satisfactions and rewards; and a series of closeups, each covering a specific health career occupation—professional, technical, supporting—giving a compact picture of what each has to offer a young person and where to get more detailed information.

The guidebook will be organized for vocational guidance usage and at the same time it will be written to appeal to the basic interests and motivations of students. Distribution will be primarily to the secondary schools, but also to health agencies, public libraries, and other community resource points.

Supplementing the guidebook will be a brief leaflet for the students and for their parents. This will be prepared for the widest possible general distribution.

The third publication category will be a series of health career posters for school and community use in calling attention to the availability of authentic Health Career Horizons information in every community in the land.

All the materials being planned in this project will be focused on the individual who is considering the selection of his career. They will deal with the personal satisfactions and opportunities for service open to young people embarking upon such careers.

The present timetable for Operation Health

Career Horizons calls for release of the basic guidebook and supporting materials by mid-winter.

### **Follows Forum Recommendations**

The plan of operation of the project follows in many respects the concrete suggestions made by vocational counselors during the 1954 National Health Forum (1). These suggestions have been summarized as follows:

1. Health groups should produce recruitment materials more adroitly designed to influence and motivate young people to enter health fields.

2. Vocational guidance groups should be consulted on how to keep informative brochures objective and accurate, yet appealing.

3. Health material should be distributed from a central source instead of being, as now, hard to find and get.

4. Material should show the broad range of opportunities in health rather than presenting one or two of the better known areas.

5. Health groups should make greater effort to give young people firsthand contact with health activities through individual conferences with persons actually engaged in the area of interest, more "career day" field visits, and more opportunities to serve as volunteers.

In keeping with the recommendation that vocational guidance groups be consulted, the National Vocational Guidance Association has named an advisory group composed of six of its members. The group will be chaired by Dr. Robert Hoppock, professor of education at New York University.

The advice and guidance of the National Association of Secondary School Principals has also been proffered, and an advisory committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Dr. Harold A. Odell, principal of the Montclair Senior High School, Montclair, N. J. Speak-

ing for the association at the announcement meeting was its 1953-54 president, Dr. Joseph C. McLain, principal of the senior high school at Mamaroneck, N. Y. Others voicing support of the health careers project were Dr. Leona Baumgartner, commissioner of health of New York City, and Ray D. Murphy, president of the Equitable Life Assurance Society.

Subsequent to the announcement of the project, expressions of support and interest have come from all quarters of the fields of health and education and community life. Already, professional health associations are reevaluating their career development and recruitment programs as discussions go forward with the Health Career Horizons project staff to determine the emphasis and content of the guidebook and other publications.

National voluntary health agencies have begun to alert their local units to the problems and opportunities of the project and to consider ways and means of stimulating and following through on local action. A project advisory committee to the executive director of the National Health Council has been set up to assist in policy development for the project. This committee is under the chairmanship of Dr. Franklin M. Foote, executive director of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. Some 1,500 local and State health councils throughout the country have been apprised of the project, and a national committee has been formed to aid local health councils in developing programs in the field of health careers. This committee is chaired by Milton Shurr, chairman of the Conference for Health Council Work.

### **REFERENCE**

- (1) National Health Council: Highlights of the 1954 National Health Forum on "Changing Factors in Staffing America's Health Services." New York. The Council, 1954. Mimeographed.